



Montana

Office of Public Instruction

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To: School Food Authority Administrators

From: Christine Emerson, Director
School Nutrition Programs

Re: 2013-14 Administrative Update Provision 2



Welcome back to school! The first step to participating in OPI School Nutrition Programs during SY 2013-14 is to update your Sponsor and Site Information Sheets at <https://apps2.opi.mt.gov/cnp/Login.asp>. Please update this information as soon as possible; no later than **September 30, 2013**. Here are some tips for navigating in the system:

Once you log in, click on Program Year 2014. Much of the information is carried over from the previous school year. Please take time to ensure that all information included on the Sponsor and Site Information Sheets is correct, including contact names and phone numbers.

Items to Note on the Site Information Sheets:

- Lines 45-50 that include the second preceding year and preceding year data will be automatically filled in.
- Lines 51-53 do not need to be updated. The free and reduced-price eligibility information will be updated when you submit your October claim for reimbursement.
- Line 115-116 Menu Planning - by submitting the form, you are attesting that the school will continue to follow the new meal pattern requirements.

The second step to operating School Nutrition Programs during SY 2013-14 is reviewing the attached Check List of annual due dates for both administrative and foodservice responsibilities. We have some major changes beginning this school year.

Transitioning from Provision 2 to the New Community Eligibility Option (CEO)

Your district currently participates in a non-pricing Provision 2 program which allows you serve free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting free and reduced-price applications. The USDA has released a new program similar to Provision 2 which provides free meals to all students. The Community Eligibility Option (CEO) is the newest, and in many ways best option for offering meals at no charge to all students in schools with high percentages of low-income students. Montana will be transitioning all Provision 2 schools to the new Community Eligibility Option. For the 2013-14 school year, please continue to count and claim meals under the same base year percentages approved for your Provision 2 school(s). The Community Eligibility Option will be available beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

Qualifying for the Community Eligibility Option

To be eligible for the Community Eligibility Option (CEO), your LEA/school must have 40 percent or more enrolled students who are considered *directly certified* as of April 1 of the year prior to participating in the Community Eligibility. To be eligible for participation in the 2014-15 school year,

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the percentage of *directly certified* will be determined as of **April 1, 2014**. It will be important to identify as many *directly certified* students as possible during the 2013-14 school year in order to be eligible for this new program the following year.

Directly Certifying Students

Directly certified students are automatically eligible for free meals due to their household's participation under an Assistance Program (SNAP, TANF or FDPIR), without further application, based on documentation or data lists provided by the State or local agency administering those programs. Direct certification is extended to all students in a household if one member has been directly certified under SNAP, TANF or FDPIR. Direct Certification for Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs also includes students identified by State or local agencies as: Homeless, Runaway, Migrant, Foster, Head Start or Even Start Programs. In most situations, direct certification of a student's eligibility status should not involve the household. **Do not distribute free and reduced-price meal applications for collection of household eligibility.**

Sources of Direct Certification

OPI, School Nutrition Programs has an agreement with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to exchange SNAP and TANF data to school districts in order to identify and directly certify eligible students for free meals. OPI is nearing completion of building a new online Direct Certification Application (DCA) system to allow proper school officials access to SNAP and TANF data. The new system securely matches SNAP and TANF recipients to students enrolled in your district. All of your district's directly certified students will need to be identified through this system and this process will be an important step in ensuring eligible students are located while transitioning to the Community Eligibility Option. Please see the attached Direct Certification Application (DCA) letter and return the User Access Form to ensure proper access is obtained. Additional training on the DCA system will be offered in the Fall.

Confirming additional Assistance Program sources such as FDPIR, Head Start/Even Start can be obtained by contacting the agency administering the program and requesting a list of participants and matching to those enrolled in your district. OPI, School Nutrition Programs may be able to provide foster children data soon (more information to follow). Homeless, Runaway and Migrant student information lists should be kept by the district's liaison/coordinator of such program.

OPI, School Nutrition Programs will be supporting your district this year and tracking your direct certification progress with transitioning to the new Community Eligibility Option. It is highly recommended to attend the Provision 2 Administrative Training this September. More information will be sent soon.

Included with this memo you will find a food allergy book. This new resource can help you prepare for students with food allergies. Additional resources about working with children with special dietary needs can be found on the OPI, School Nutrition Programs website (from the menu click Forms & Guidelines then Civil Rights and Special Needs).

Call our office at (406) 444-2501 with questions. Have a wonderful school year!